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WHITE LAKE

DEVELOPMENT
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1963*



DEVELOPMENT STUDY



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This report was prepared by the

for the

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North Carolina Highway Commission
4. Advance Planning Department
North Carolina Highway Commission
5. Town of White Lake

PUBLICATIONS

Inventory of Fish Population in Lentic Waters,
N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission, 1961.

A Fish Resources Survey of North Carolina's Bay Lakes, David Frey and Edward Hueske.

A New Geography of North Carolina, Bill Sharpe, Sharp Publishing Company, Raleigh, 1961, pp. 1143 - 1149.

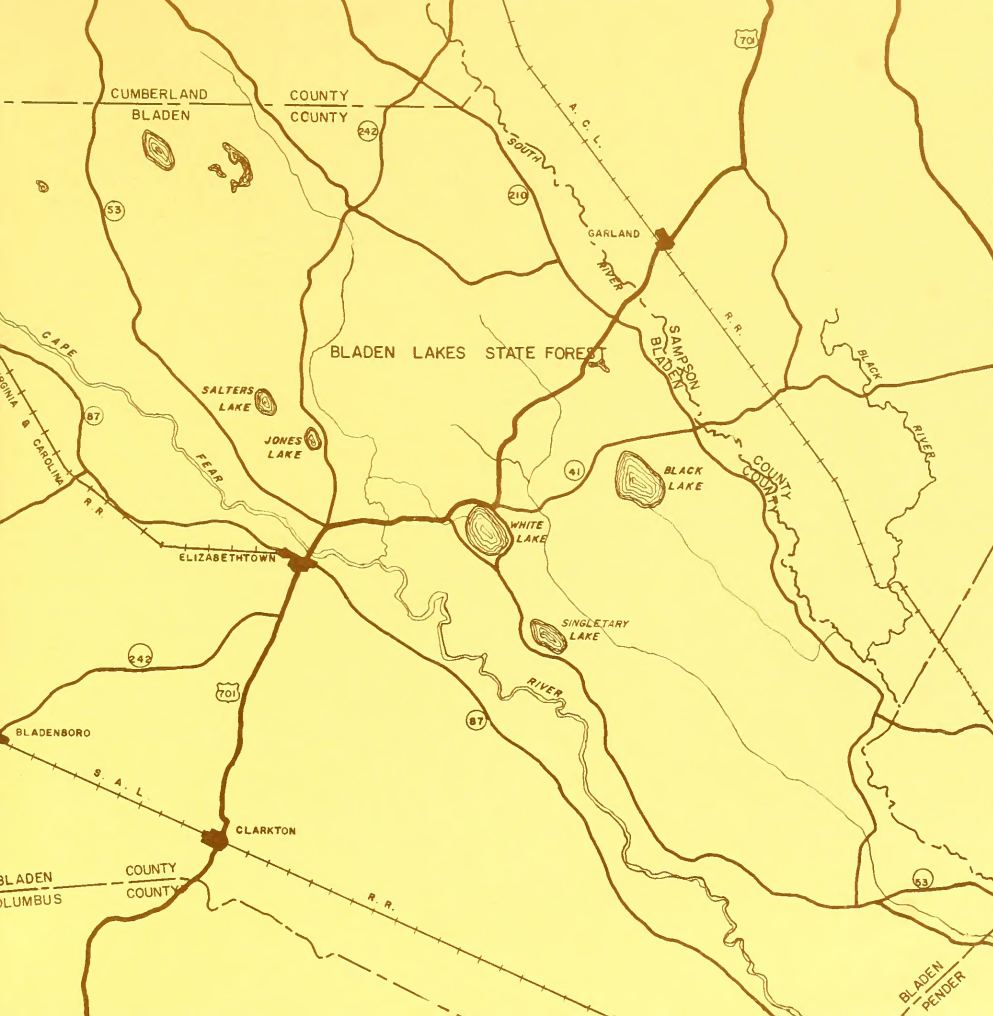
PREFACE

In an effort to determine what actions, if any, are needed to guide the development of White Lake as an urban community, the Board of Commissioners of the Town of White Lake requested the Division of Community Planning of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development to make a study of the White Lake Community - its characteristics, its assets, and its liabilities. Federal funds to assist the Town of White Lake in financing the project were obtained and the study was undertaken.

This report contains the findings of the study. The text is divided into five basic sections; the first deals with the setting of White Lake and its natural characteristics; the second relates information about the population and economic situation of the town; the third describes the use of land in the community; the fourth cites development problems, and suggested solutions; and the concluding section presents and discusses a development plan for White Lake.

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1

THE SETTING

THE BLADEN
LAKES REGION



APPROX. SCALE
1 IN. = 4 MI.

1

INTRODUCTION

The existence of the Town of White Lake is due primarily to the existence of White Lake, the body of water. Development around the lake is relatively recent, dating from the 1920's when C. W. Sandrock built the first resort structure there. Not until 1951 when development had encircled half of the White Lake shoreline was the Town of White Lake incorporated. Because the primary function of the Town is that of serving the people who come to White Lake and the Bladen Lakes region seeking recreation, the first part of this report is devoted to a physical description of the Bladen Lakes Region and White Lake.

BLADEN LAKES REGION

White Lake is one of 5 natural "bay" lakes comprising the Bladen Lakes area of Bladen County, North Carolina. This area which contains about 175 square miles is located less than 50 miles from the Atlantic Ocean and is midway between Fayetteville and Wilmington, the two largest cities in southeastern North Carolina. The principal town in the area is Elizabethtown, the County Seat of Bladen County; its 1960 population was 1,625. Bladen County is largely undeveloped; about 90 percent of the land area is in woodlands. The Bladen Lakes area is served by one Federal Highway, U. S. 701, and by North Carolina Highways 242, 53, 41, and 87. The presence of the Lakes, the Cape Fear, South, and Black Rivers, and the Bladen Lakes State Forest make the area popular as a recreation spot

for hunting, fishing, and other water sports. The mean annual temperature in the Bladen Lakes region is 62 degrees Fahrenheit. Mean annual precipitation amounts to about 43.9 inches.

BLADEN LAKES CHARACTERISTICS

The 5 principal Bladen County Lakes, Salters, Singletary, Black, Jones, and White, are all "bay" lakes, i.e. natural lakes which like the thousands of other oval coastal plains depressions called "bays" were formed eons ago but which unlike most of the other "bays" have not become filled with vegetation and peat. Several theories relating to the origin of the "bays" have been offered including explanations involving meteorites, artesian springs, wind and waves, and schools of fish.

Of the Bladen Lakes, only three now have use as recreation facilities. White Lake which has the clearest waters and the largest fish population, is the most extensively used. Jones Lake is the site of a park for Negroes and Singletary Lake has limited facilities for group camping. Salters Lake and Black Lake are not readily accessible and have little use.

The land area covered by water at all five Bladen Lakes is state owned; however, only at Jones and Singletary Lakes does the state own lake shore property of any magnitude.

WHITE LAKE CHARACTERISTICS

White Lake covers approximately 1068 acres of land and has a shoreline of about 4 1/4 miles. The deepest portion of the Lake is 10.6 feet which is reached near the southeastern shore. Near this point the gradient of the lake bottom is quite steep. The mean lake depth is 7.5 feet; lake bottom slopes along the northeast and southwest shores are quite gentle. Narrow, natural sand beaches are found along the northeast, southeast, and southwest lake shore.

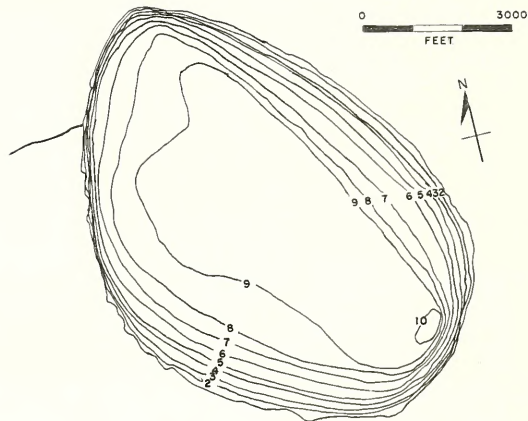
White Lake has no surface tributary, instead it is fed by a number of springs at the bottom of the lake and by rainfall; its outlet is on the northwestern side of the lake. Like the other Bladen Lakes, its water level fluctuates less than 1.5 feet annually.

The northwestern shore of the lake is swampy; consequently, the waters in that portion of the lake are discolored by suspended solids; however, because the natural lake outlet is on that end of the lake, the remainder of the waters are left reasonably clear. This clear condition makes White Lake unique among the Bladen Lakes.

Some 29 percent of the "bay" in which White Lake is situated has become filled with vegetation and peat; this natural filling is particularly noticeable in the swamp along the northwestern shore. According to a survey by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission during 1957, 1958, and 1959, White

Lake contains the most productive fishing waters of the Bladen County Lakes; however, its productivity is below the state average. Good catches of blue gill, yellow perch, and large-mouth bass were taken in the northwestern portion of the Lake. During the survey period there was a noticeable improvement in large-mouth bass fishing.

WHITE LAKE DEPTH IN FEET



Source: David Frey and Edward Hueske, A Fish Resources Survey of North Carolina's Bay Lakes, p. 4.



2

THE
POPULATION
AND
THE
ECONOMY



POPULATION

The population of the Town of White Lake consists of two groups -- the year-round residents and the seasonal residents. Detailed characteristics on the seasonal population are not available; however, characteristics on the year round population have been obtained through interviews with several White Lake residents.

YEAR-ROUND POPULATION

There are 129 year-round inhabitants of the Town of White Lake including 65 males and 64 females. The 1960 Census count indicated that there were 130 inhabitants of the Town at that time. Census counts of the Town were not taken prior to 1951 when White Lake was incorporated.

The year-round population contains no non-whites; six residents were born outside the United States, three in Italy, two in France, and one in Czechoslovakia.

The average educational attainment of the year-round population is at the twelfth grade level. White Lake school age children attend schools in Elizabethtown.

Forty-one of the year-round residents were reported as being gainfully employed during at least part of the year. Twenty-eight of these workers were employed in jobs in the Town of White Lake; the remainder worked elsewhere, predominately in Elizabethtown. Eight residents were listed as retired, however, most of them work part-time in tourist-serving activities.

AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS OF WHITE LAKE'S YEAR-ROUND POPULATION (1962)

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under 5	1	6	7
5-9	6	4	10
10-19	13	14	27
20-29	3	4	7
30-39	5	10	15
40-49	13	7	20
50-59	10	5	15
60-69	10	9	19
70-79	4	2	6
80+		3	3
TOTAL	<u>65</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>129</u>

SEASONAL POPULATION

Little information is available on the characteristics of the seasonal population of White Lake; however, it includes tourists of all types including cottage owners, weekly and overnight renters and guests, and families, parties, and individuals who come for one day. There are few people who come to the Lake for the summer; many more come for one or two weeks; however, about one-half of the seasonal population is believed to come for a stay of one or two days.

Estimates of the size of the seasonal population have been made based upon the results of housing surveys and traffic counts. The average summer weekday population of White Lake is estimated at 2000 to 3000 with week-end peaks averaging 5000 to 7000.

Information as to where the seasonal population of White Lake originates was obtained through interviews with White Lake business operators and from surveys of automobile licenses and property owner addresses. The two geographical areas from which most of the seasonal population comes are the area within a fifty-mile radius of the Lake including Fayetteville, Elizabethtown, and Clinton and the Piedmont Crescent urban areas of North Carolina.

ECONOMY

As indicated earlier, the White Lake community is primarily a resort center. Consequently, most of the economic activity there is directed toward providing for the needs of tourists, including housing, food, amusement and auto service.

Most of the commercial establishments are seasonal with an operational period of 3 to 4 months beginning in May or June and ending in August or September. Only 12 commercial establishments were reported as operating on a year-round basis; three of these are highway serving businesses located on U.S. 701; six of the remaining establishments operate rental lodging enterprises.

The following list indicates the approximate types and numbers of seasonal businesses operated in the White Lake Community.

Rental cottages and apartments	(155)
Rental mobile homes and/or	
spaces for mobile homes	(60)
Motels	(6)
Restaurants and cafes	(5)

Service stations	(4)
Beach concession areas	(4)
Grocery stores	(4)
Hotels	(3)
Marinas	(1)
Beauty shops	(1)

Some of these establishments are combination operations such as service station-cafe, grocery-hardware, or grocery-service station. In addition, small operations such as novelty shops, drink stands, etc., and combinations of such establishments exist which are not included in the previous list.

Reports on in-season fluctuations as obtained for commercial operators indicated the following:

1. Rental housing of good quality is usually well-occupied throughout the summer season.
2. Poor quality rental housing is usually fully-occupied only on weekends.
3. Receipts from commercial operations are approximately equal to operating costs during weekdays with weekend peaks providing most of the seasonal profits.

An indication as to where the money invested in White Lake business and properties comes from is shown by the following map showing homes addresses of White Lake property owners by city of residence. Almost three-fourths of the property owners list addresses within a 50-mile radius of White Lake. The majority of the remaining property owners live in cities and towns in the Piedmont Crescent region of North Carolina. Interesting, less than 10 property owners are from areas to the south of White Lake and Elizabethtown.

DISTRIBUTION OF WHITE LAKE
PROPERTY OWNERS BY MAILING ADDRESS

<u>Distance from White Lake</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than 50 miles	293	74.4
50-100 miles	27	6.8
100-150 miles	65	16.5
More than 150 miles	9	2.3
TOTAL	394	100.0

Some evidence of the willingness of property owners to invest in White Lake development is indicated by the continuing submission of applications for building permits for construction activities. The following table lists the number of building permits issued annually since the Town of White Lake was incorporated in 1951.

BUILDING PERMITS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>
1952	4
1953	22
1954	14
1955	21
1956	12
1957	33
1958	9
1959	9
1960	15
1961	16
1962	23

Another growth indicator is found in the increase in the number of property owners in the Town of White Lake. In 1951 there were 267 property owners listed as compared to 410 in 1961.

Total assessed evaluation for all property in White Lake increased from 539.0 thousand dollars in 1951 to 1556.2 thousand dollars in 1961. The following table shows annual evaluation of real and total property in White Lake for the past ten years. The large evaluation increase shown from 1957 to 1958 was the result of a property re-evaluation.

WHITE LAKE
PROPERTY EVALUATION

<u>Year</u>	<u>Real Property</u>	<u>All Property</u>
1951	\$ 469,516	\$ 538,950
1952	523,046	610,433
1953	573,055	689,626
1954	608,449	738,101
1955	637,553	715,848
1956	677,471	838,849
1957	688,346	860,351
1958	1,169,968	1,285,689
1959	1,189,347	1,412,531
1960	1,230,837	1,457,112
1961	1,310,680	1,556,239

3



EXISTING
LAND
AND
LAKE
USE



LAND USE - TOWN OF WHITE LAKE

Approximately 457.6 acres of land are contained within the Town Limits of White Lake. Of this land about 57.1 percent (261.5 acres) is in use. This total does not include land now in woodland, swamp or open fields.

The principal use of land is for residential purposes including year-round homes, seasonal cottages, rental cottages, motels, hotels, and mobile homes. About 155.2 acres (54.5 percent) of the total land in use is devoted to residences. More than two-thirds of the residential land (105.8 acres) is used for non-rental purposes while the remaining one-third (49.4 acres) is used for rental housing.

Some 25.1 acres are used as commercial space in White Lake; this amounts to 9.6 percent of the total land in use. About two-thirds (17.6 acres) of the commercial land area is in recreational uses and is largely distributed among three principal beach concession areas. The land used for other businesses totals 7.5 acres or 2.9 percent of the total land in use. This land is largely in individual lots used for restaurants, grocery stores, service stations, novelty shops, and similar uses.

Governmental uses of land take up about 22.3 acres (8.5 percent) of the total land in use. The largest governmental uses are the Future Farmers and 4-H Camps. Other smaller land areas are used for the town hall, the water tank, the post office, and the cemetery.

The airfield, which is partly inside and partly outside of Town uses about 6 acres of

land within the corporate limits.

About 58.9 acres of road rights-of-way exist in White Lake, all of which are privately owned, with the exception of Lake Road and a small section of U.S. 701. The total roadway acreage amounts to 22.5 percent of the total land in use.

EXISTING LAND USE TOWN OF WHITE LAKE July, 1962

<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
RESIDENTIAL	155.2	59.4
Non-rental	105.8	40.5
Rental	49.4	18.9
COMMERCIAL	25.1	9.6
Recreational	17.6	6.7
Other Business	7.5	2.9
GOVERNMENTAL	16.3	6.2
Camps	14.3	5.4
Municipal	1.0	.4
Other	1.0	.4
AIRFIELD	6.0	2.3
STREET RIGHTS-OF-WAY	58.9	22.5
TOTAL LAND IN USE	261.5	57.1 100.0
TOTAL VACANT LAND	196.1	42.9
TOTAL LAND	457.6	100.0

EXISTING LAND USE

JULY, 1962

RESIDENTIAL

- RENTAL
- NON-RENTAL

COMMERCIAL

- RECREATION
- OTHER BUSINESS
- GOVERNMENTAL
- (AS INDICATED)

OTHER

- SWAMP
- PIERS

SYMBOLS

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| | SEASONAL VEGETATION |
| DOM. BLDG | □ |
| COTTAGES | ○ |
| TRAILERS | ⌈ |
| | ● |
| | ⦿ |



LAND USE - OUTSIDE THE TOWN LIMITS

There are about 97 acres of development around White Lake outside the Town of White Lake. About 40 acres of this land are in governmental uses including N.C. Prison Unit No. 601 and the White Lake sewage lagoon. Residential and commercial development use 6.0 and 3.2 acres, respectively. Road rights-of-way total about 40 acres. As indicated on the Existing Land Use Map, most of the land outside the Town Limits is vacant.

EXISTING LAND USE OUTSIDE THE WHITE LAKE TOWN LIMITS July, 1962

Residential	6.0
Commercial	3.2
Governmental	40.0
Airfield	7.1
Street rights-of-way	40.5
- - - - -	- - - - -
TOTAL LAND IN USE	96.7

LAKE USE

White Lake covers a land area of 1,068 acres and has a shoreline of approximately 45 miles. Land development now fringes most of the shoreline with the exception of 1.3 miles of swamp land along the northwest shoreline which is now being prepared for future use.

Paralleling this land development has been pier development which now encircles about two-thirds of the lake. According to pier permit records of the N.C. Division of State Parks, the number of piers has increased from 97 in 1951 to 168 in 1962. These piers range in length from 22 feet to 375 feet; the average length is about 145 feet. Most piers are used privately; however, 15 are operated in conjunction with commercial land uses.

Swimming and sun bathing are generally carried on in the pier development section of the lake whereas the center of the lake is devoted to boating and water skiing. Fishing is a lakewide activity; however, it is reportedly better in the northwest portion.

Pier construction and fishing and boating activities on White Lake are all supervised by the N.C. Department of Conservation and Development. Permits are required for each of these activities.

LAND DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

As described in the previous section, about 60 percent of the land within the Town of White Lake is now developed. Most of this development is on the lake or interior side of the principal roads which encircle the Lake.

The highest intensity of development and also the widest variety of land uses are found along Lake Road. There commercial development and activities are concentrated in the area between the Town Hall and Carolina Avenue.

Opposite the Town Hall is an area of mixed housing types, including rental cottages, non-rental cottages, motels, hotels, mobile homes, and permanent residences. Lots are small and there is often little space between buildings. This area is bordered on the west by Melvin's Beach, a combination of beach concessions and rental housing, and on the north by the Goldston's Beach - Crystal Beach complex.

The latter area which is the center of White Lake recreation activities consists of beach concessions, rides, motels, rental cottages, and parking lots. Along Lake Road near these beaches is a small shopping-services center consisting of a grocery, a restaurant, a vacant night club, and a theatre building which is now used as the post office.

To the north of the Goldston's Beach-Crystal Beach area is a second commercial housing area

which consists largely of rental cottages with a few scattered non-rental cottages, motels, permanent residences, and mobile homes. Most of the rental development in this section is overcrowded with buildings located too close and minimum lot size too small.

Next, along Lake Road is a long strip of cottage development which extends from Carolina Avenue to the 4-H Camp. Here the lots are large and most of the structures are located near the lake front leaving the bulk of the land between the lake front and Lake Road vacant.

On the north side of the 4-H camp is an area in which commercial housing and recreation activities are mixed. Uses located there are hotels, motels, mobile homes, and beach concessions. This area extends past the junction of Lake Road and U.S. 701.

West of White Lake Beach on U.S. 701 is a cottage area which extends to the town limits, with the White Lake Marina the only non-residential use in the area.

On N. C. 53, development consists primarily of cottages which extend from Woodbury Drive to the N. C. State Pier. Areas to the north-west and southwest are lowlands which are now vacant but which are scheduled for some filling and residential development.



4



PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the White Lake Community has numerous assets - the lake, the climate, the municipal water and sewer systems, etc. - it also has many problems. For purposes of discussion, these problems have been divided into two categories -- general and land development. General problems are those pertaining to the overall economic success of the community as a tourist center and land development problems relate to the physical development of the community. Suggested community improvements and recommendations for alleviating and preventing problems are also discussed in this chapter.

GENERAL PROBLEMS

The most important general problems of the White Lake Community are directly related to its tourism functions. Three important matters requiring immediate attention are:

1. the need for lengthening the recreation season at the Lake;
2. the need for attracting more vacationers during the season; and,
3. the need for attracting tourists from a wider geographic area.

There are many ways in which these needs can be met; a few are discussed here.

A concentrated effort should be made to improve the general physical appearance of the community. This will involve a clean up - fix up phase of operations followed by constant attention to maintenance and the quality of new development. A more detailed discussion of needed physical improvements is included in later sections of this study.

A well-coordinated advertising campaign should be undertaken in areas beyond the present service area of White Lake as well as in the existing service area. This should be coupled with an advertising program at the lake which takes advantage of the natural beauty of the surroundings through the use of strategically located rest stops, picnic areas and tourist information centers.

Active recreation facilities in addition to water-oriented activities should be provided including golf courses, tennis courts, athletic fields, riding stables, etc. Passive recreation facilities including a municipal park and a Bladen County Library Branch or book mobile stop should also be developed.

Establishments catering to specialized needs such as hunting and fishing lodges, convention and group meeting facilities, etc. might bring additional off-season tourists to the area. Special services and rates at Lake facilities during the off-season might also increase the tourist trade.

LAND DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the problems listed in this section are contributive to the general problems of the White Lake Community which were listed earlier.

1. Improper Land Use

The improper use of land in White Lake is not a widespread problem; however, there are certain key areas in which the improper mixing of land uses and a lack of adequate dimensional requirements have resulted in unattractive and uneconomical development which in some cases poses a threat to the health and safety of the area's inhabitants.

The area between Melvin's Beach and Carolina Avenue is illustrative of the development which can occur when there are no adequate land use or zoning controls. In this area every type of land use in the Town can be found -- beach concessions, cottages, hotels, motels, government buildings, stores, restaurants, permanent residences, mobile homes, etc. Many buildings are located with little regard for adjacent buildings, property lines, street lines, etc. Few open spaces are left, parking is limited, and little attention has been given to pedestrian and vehicular movement requirements.

In contrast with the area just described, the strip of development along Lake Road between Carolina Avenue and the 4-H camp illustrates a natural zoning which has occurred. This area consists primarily of non-rental cottages which have generally been located without overcrowding.

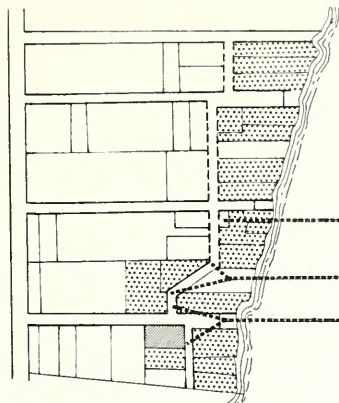
To prevent further misuse of land and the resulting haphazard development and property value decline, the Town of White Lake should adopt and enforce a zoning ordinance. Such an ordinance would require new development to conform to stated use and density regulations and would prevent the overcrowding of land, the locating of structures too close together, the mixing of incompatible land uses, and the construction and location of buildings on property lines and street lines.

2. Improper Land Subdivision

Almost half of the Town of White Lake which has been subdivided has been done so with little regard being given to adequate standards for lot and street lay-out. Some of the deficiencies evident from looking at the Town in reality or on a map are as follows. There are:

- a. large, vacant land parcels from which small, isolated lots have been sold with reference to no overall pattern;
- b. lots, which are too small for development;
- c. misshapen lots -- triangles, etc., forgotten corners -- which cannot be properly developed;
- d. lots, which have poor access to either public or private streets;
- e. inland lots, the owners and users of which have no legal access to lake front property or to the lake;
- f. lots on which no setback or other yard requirements have been established; and,
- g. streets, which have narrow rights-of-way, uncertain alignment, frequent changes in width and general disregard for street design standards.

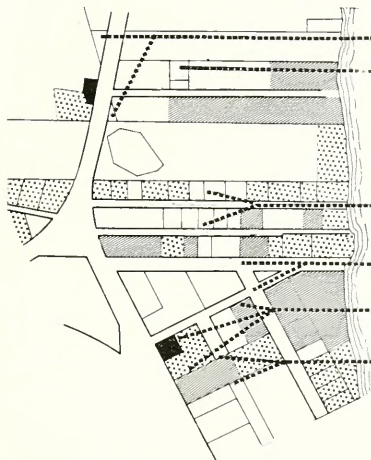
EXAMPLES OF POOR LAND USE AND SUBDIVISION PRACTICES



LOTS TOO SMALL FOR DEVELOPMENT

IRREGULAR STREET ALIGNMENT

CHANGING STREET WIDTHS



ODD SHAPED LOTS

ISOLATED LOTS

DOUBLE FRONTAGE LOTS

POOR STREET INTERSECTION

HAPHAZARD MIXING OF LAND USES

BREAK IN STREET LINES



commercial housing



noncommercial housing



other commercial activity

To improve the platting of vacant White Lake property, subdivision regulations should be enacted by the Town. The use of these regulations would insure that streets and lots in new subdivisions would be laid out and developed properly and that adequate improvements such as water, sewer, and streets would be provided by the developer.

3. Substandard Buildings

A number of structures in White Lake, both commercial and residential, are substandard as a result of either poor initial construction, improper maintenance, or both. These structures detract from the buildings around them and serve as negative advertisement for the Town.

Deficiencies range from a need for painting or minor repairs to major structural defects which call for reconstruction or razing. These substandard conditions result in not only poor visual appearance but also health and safety hazards.

Many buildings are now used for purposes for which they are not suitable. For example, some buildings which were constructed for use as tool sheds, garages, etc. are now used as rental dwellings. In one partially burned out commercial building, the upper floor is used for rental lodging.

To alleviate and prevent these and other substandard building conditions the Town needs to adopt and enforce two types of codes, minimum housing and building.

The minimum housing code would be useful in improving and eliminating existing residential buildings which are substandard. The code would apply to defects such as dilapidation, fire and accident hazards, lack of sanitary facilities, and uncleanness. Proper enforcement would require structures found unfit for human habitation to be improved to a satisfactory level or to be torn down, whichever is more feasible.

The North Carolina Building Code is used by the Town to guide new construction. Properly applied, the standards of the Code would insure that adequate provisions are made in new buildings for safety, fire prevention, ventilation, sanitation, and general liveability.

The Town of White Lake needs a building inspector to administer the standards of these two codes. He should make periodic inspections of all buildings to see that they are maintained at safe, satisfactory levels.

Individual property owners should concentrate on maintaining their properties at satisfactory levels without the pressure of code enforcement. The presence of one grossly substandard structure in a group of houses detracts from not only the appearance of that lot but also from the appearance and value of surrounding properties.

4. Inadequate Streets and Parking

The street and parking situation in White Lake is not adequate for current peak demands. As stated earlier, the only publicly owned and

maintained streets in Town are Lake Road and a small section of U.S. 701. The remainder of the streets, which are privately owned, are maintained subject to the whims of the abutting property owners.

There is no pattern to the system of minor streets and driveways. Some lots have individual drives while others share common ones. The numerous intersections of these private driveways and streets with the principal traffic-moving streets - Lake Road, N.C. 53, and U.S. 701 - limits the capacity of the major streets for moving traffic. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic is mixed and conflicts are frequent.

The traffic-moving capacity of Lake Road is further limited by roadside parking and pedestrian walking and crossing near the Goldston's Beach - Crystal Beach commercial area. There are no established crosswalks or traffic signals. The lack of adequate off-street parking is particularly evident during weekend peak periods when available parking lots are filled by 10 or 11 a.m. after which both sides of Lake Road are lined with cars.

Under existing conditions, Lake Road is no longer able to accommodate peak traffic volumes between Melvin's Beach and U.S. 701. Traffic jams and parking space shortages tend to discourage additional attendance at the Lake.

Street and parking improvement recommendations are included in the Development Plan discussion; however, it should be noted here that the Town needs to make, adopt, and implement plans for its major streets and off-street parking needs immediately.

5. Unimproved Highway Entrance to White Lake
The drab, unimproved entrances to White Lake, decorated primarily with signs advertising individual businesses, do not indicate to the passer-by that White Lake is a special sort of recreation area. There is no facility near any highway entrance to the lake which encourages the passing traveler to stop, look at the lake, and see what the community has to offer. Neither is there any prominent feature other than the view of the lake from Highway 701 across White Lake Beach which serves as a key identification spot, i.e. something to be remembered long after the traveler has passed by the lake.

As stated in the section on General Problems, an effort should be made to develop a system of strategically located rest stops, picnic areas, and tourist information centers which would complement the natural beauty of the area. The principal facilities of this type should be located along Highway 701 near its junctions with N.C. 53 and Lake Road. Attention should be given to the landscaping of highway median strips and rights-of-way; regulations for the billboards and signs in the area should also be considered. Deficient advertising structures should be improved or removed.

5



THE
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN



THE PLAN

The White Lake Development Plan is a working drawing which can be used both in solving existing developmental problems and for guiding future development. The Plan suggests generalized concepts and solutions; specific solutions and detailed designs will be needed as specific projects are undertaken. The Plan is presented graphically on a copy of the Existing Land Use Map so that the relationship between the plan proposals and the existing situation can be easily determined.

STREET AND PARKING

One of the existing problems as discussed in the previous section is the inadequacy of the streets and parking areas to handle peak tourist traffic. A serviceable system of streets and parking lots will be needed to connect and serve the various land use areas of the Development Plan; therefore, the portions of the Plan dealing with these items are presented first.

Street and parking improvements should be made in a series of activities beginning immediately.

1. Parking lots should be constructed in the vicinity of all beach and commercial activity centers. Parking should then be eliminated along the shoulders of Lake Road, N.C. 53, and U.S. 701. Off-street parking facilities should be added as rapidly as the demand for off-street parking space increases.
2. All streets should be dedicated to the Town of White Lake for improvement and maintenance. The Town should then apply

for Powell Bill funds to help defray annual maintenance costs.

3. Internal streets of both vacant and developed land areas should be redesigned with unnecessary duplications eliminated, alignment improved, standard roadway and right-of-way widths established, and collector streets paved.
4. The three principal traffic arteries, Lake Road, U.S. 701, and N.C. 53, should be designated as limited access facilities with driveway and street entrances permitted only at appropriate places. Access to abutting properties can be provided by frontage roads and internal streets and driveways.

The four previously stated actions would decrease the traffic conflicts and delays which are so prevalent now and would increase the traffic-moving capacity of the existing major roads.

5. Lake Road should eventually be developed as a four-lane boulevard with sections being added as traffic volumes increase. For example, the portion of the road between U.S. 701 and Crystal Beach - Coldston's Beach could be constructed first and the link with N.C. 53 added later. Some relocations of portions of Lake Road should be made so that additional development can take place on the Lake side of the road and so that conflicts between internal vehicular and pedestrian traffic and through traffic would be at a minimum. A Lake Road boulevard would not only improve traffic circulation around the activity center of the Lake but would also be a valuable advertising device for the community if the right-of-way is well landscaped and maintained.

6. Four-lane facilities should also be provided along the portions of U.S. 701 where vehicular turning movements or traffic volumes warrant such development.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The Development Plan provides for two types of residential areas - one predominately commercial, consisting of hotels, motels, trailer parks, and rental cottages and the other, non-commercial, made up largely of non-rental cottages. The general intensity of development in the two types of areas would differ markedly. High development densities, noise, heavy traffic, and bright lights would prevail in the commercial areas, whereas the non-commercial areas would be relatively self-sufficient with facilities in the cottages for eating and entertainment. Residents of the commercial areas would be dependent upon outside establishments for food, entertainment, and other services; therefore, commercial residential areas should be located near shopping, service, and entertainment centers.

Commercial Residential Development

Commercial residential development is indicated on the Development Plan for the areas between Melvins' and Goldston's Beaches on Lake Road, between Crystal Beach and Carolina Avenue on Lake Road, between the 4-H camp and White Lake at the intersection of Lake Road and U.S. 701, and between White Lake Beach and the existing Town Limits of U.S. 701.

The first three such areas are now predominantly used for rental housing; however, some of the existing development is unattractive or substandard. Substandard structures should be replaced with well-designed hotels and motels suitable for not only individual and family use but also for large group use such

as that of conventions and other mass meetings. Marinas, golf putting greens, tennis courts, and other recreational facilities should be constructed in conjunction with motel and hotel development.

The fourth commercial residential area, the one shown along U.S. 701, would serve two principal functions - (1) that of housing tourists traveling along U.S. 701 through the White Lake Area to destinations elsewhere and (2) that of housing White Lake vacationers. Quality motel and hotel development there could be one of White Lake's most valuable manmade advertising devices.

Non-Commercial Residential Development

Non-commercial residential development is planned for existing cottage areas and for vacant lands on the northwest and southwest shores of the Lake. Conditions in many of the existing cottage areas should be improved with dilapidated structures removed and with street improvements undertaken.

Much of the vacant land which has been subdivided has been poorly planned and should be replatted with improved lot and street layout before additional development occurs.

Many large lots, such as those along Lake Road, on which development has been concentrated near the lake front and the remaining three-fourths of the lot left vacant could well be subdivided and developed with additional streets and cottages.

Provisions should be made to provide lake-use privileges to residents of non-lake-front lots in both commercial and non-commercial housing areas. Such privileges could be made available through rents, easements, or joint ownership of portions of the lake front in residential areas.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

The commercial areas indicated on the Plan are of four types - Beach, Amusement Park, Marina, and Shopping-Service.

Beach

Beach commercial development consists of swimming - sun bathing - picnic areas which would have a minimum of ground coverage in buildings; only such structures as bath houses and refreshment stands would be needed. Beach areas would not include noisy games, rides, or musical devices. Commercial beach areas are intended for use by those tourists who come to White Lake for the day and for tourists lodged in establishments which do not provide lake-use privileges. The Plan suggests four commercial beach areas - three at existing beaches and an additional one near N.C. 53.

Amusement Park

Amusement park areas would include intense, noisy recreation activities such as those of a penny arcade - games, rides, refreshments, music, etc. Since such areas require large crowd concentrations, only one amusement center is provided in the plan. Its suggested location is that of the present Goldston's Beach - Crystal Beach complex which is the present amusement center of White Lake.

Marina

Marina development is a noisy activity requiring a relatively large land area for parking and vehicular circulation, deep water, and easy access to major roads. Such activity

is not desirable in the vicinity of mass swimming activities. For these reasons, marina locations are suggested along the swampy northwestern lake shore. Ramp, parking, and road facilities could be constructed by a combination of dredging and filling.

Shopping-Service Center

Shopping-service commercial areas are those providing the goods and services required by tourists. Establishments included in these areas would be grocery stores, drug stores, restaurants, novelty and gift shops, service stations, etc. The Plan provides for highway-service centers near major intersections. These centers would include service stations, grocery stores, and restaurants. Other shopping-service centers would be provided along Lake Road near the lake amusement park.

GOVERNMENTAL AREAS

The existing municipal, county and state land use areas have been retained in the Development Plan; however, it is assumed that the use of these areas will be intensified and in some cases expanded. No land area increase is shown for the F.F.A., 4-H, and State Pier properties. According to the Plan the Town Hall site would be expanded with additional facilities provided for a library and a community park. Additional park-picnic areas are provided at suitable spots along Lake Road and U.S. 701. Combination rest stop - tourist information centers should be located near the intersections of U.S. 701 with N.C. 53 and Lake Road.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LAND USE

RESIDENTIAL

- COMMERCIAL
- NON-COMMERCIAL
- COMMERCIAL

- BEACH
- AMUSEMENT
- MARINA
- SHOPPING-SERVICE
- PARKING

GOVERNMENTAL

- (AS INDICATED)
- TOURIST INFO.
- PICNIC

STREETS

- EXISTING PROPOSED
- MAJOR
- MINOR



SCALE IN FEET

ACTION

The plans and improvement suggestions discussed in this report cannot be carried out unless the property owners and businessmen of White Lake support a community improvement program. The tasks which need to be undertaken are many; however, most can be accomplished if there is proper organization and a unity of purpose. Some of the jobs to be done can best be handled through the Town government; others can be most feasibly undertaken through private organizations such as groups of property owners and business operators; still others must be undertaken by the Town and private groups working together.

The following list shows some of the improvements that should be made and indicate what group or groups should be responsible for each improvement. Although all of these improvements may not be accomplished within the next few years, every bit of progress made will make White Lake more liveable for its residents and more appealing to its visitors.

WHITE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Organizational Responsibility

Town Government

1. Zoning
2. Subdivision regulation
3. Minimum housing code
4. Building code
5. Other codes and ordinances
6. Thoroughfare plans
7. Street improvements
8. Library
9. Community park

Chamber of Commerce and Other Business Operators

1. Off-street parking
2. Picnic areas
3. Rest stops
4. Tourist information centers

Property Owners

1. Clean up - fix up
2. Replat vacant property
3. Dedicate streets

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